

The parish magazine of

Hertford St Andrew

www.hertfordstandrews.co.uk

MARCH 2025

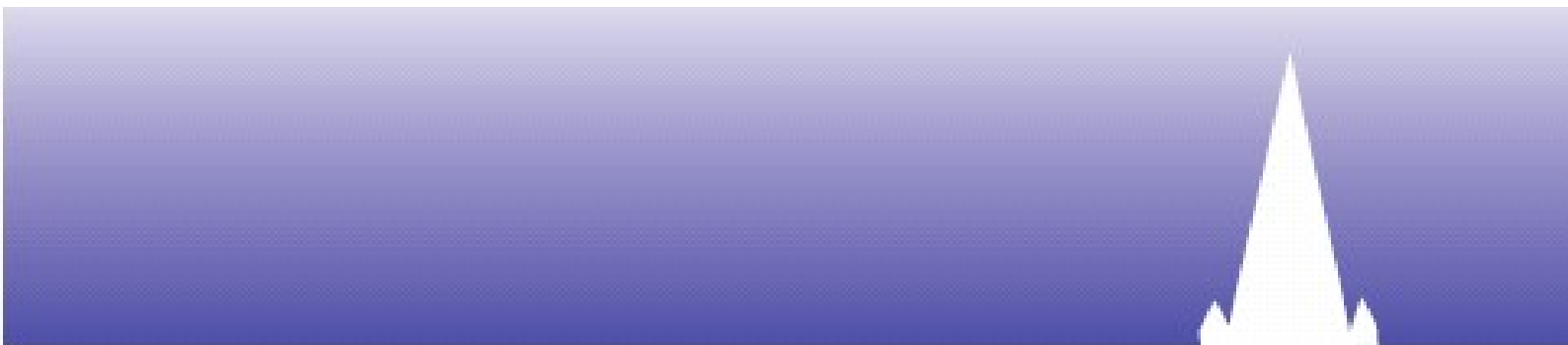
no one belongs
here more
than you

following the example of Jesus, we

welcome

all people whatever your status, sexuality, gender,
ethnicity, age, health or ability

we believe that church should be a safe place to
explore and to question, to worship and to doubt,
to fail and forgive



Here with you Here for you

HERTFORD ST ANDREW

Registered charity 1132540

website: www.HertfordStAndrews.co.uk

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Parochial Church Council comprises the Clergy, Readers, Churchwardens, Deanery Synod Members and Treasurer plus the following elected and co-opted members: Maria Henriksson-Bell, Chris Seward, Jenny Mutch, Louise Cobb, Laura Ramsay, Catherine Sleath, Adrian Walter, Chrissy Barclay, Anthony Collinson, Julie Frazer and Malcolm Fry.

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Richard Taylor (Chairman), Malcolm Fry, Carol Muhr, Philippa Probert, Laura Ramsay, Judy Sharman, David Spring and Rod Willis.

Whilst every reasonable care has been taken in presenting the information in this magazine, no responsibility can be taken for any inaccuracies. The opinions expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those of the Priests, Churchwardens or editor.

OUR LEGACY

For many thousands of people, the wildfires that ravaged Los Angeles in January took almost everything. When finally, the embers cooled, they returned to their destroyed homes to discover if they could salvage anything of value. For many it was the small things which managed to bring the biggest smiles.

For a little boy, it was a toy lawnmower he'd purposefully hidden inside a bush. For others, it was a Christmas ornament, a Dr. Seuss book, two pearls from a necklace and two surviving dishes from a great-aunt's dinner service.

Such a devastating experience can teach us the true value of the little things.

If you had to salvage just one thing from your home, what might that be?

I imagine it would be something irreplaceable, something sentimental; something that reminds us perhaps of someone we love.

I remember once walking along the beach on Holy Island in Northumbria and coming across the ashes of a bonfire. Among the ashes I found an iron nail, a hacksaw blade and a metal circular disc of unknown function. These alone had survived the flames. As I held them in my hand, they assembled themselves into a Celtic cross. And that day I was reminded that the only certain thing that lasts is love itself. As Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 'Love never fails' Everything else in



time perishes, except for love. It's the only legacy we leave that ripples on in the future.

People sometimes ask me about what lies beyond this life, and I have to be honest and say that that remains for all of us a mystery. The Bible has very little to say except for the story of the One who returned from death, and whose first word to his frightened friends was 'Peace'.

What I do know is that love never fails; that every act of love, great and small; every sacrifice; every kindness, every kiss, has a life that goes on. These things are not lost in the fires we call death. And, that's the most beautiful thing I can live by. Every act and word and gesture of love that I show today, whether it's reciprocated or not, lives on. This is our legacy.

Alan



WELCOME... I am pleased to welcome everyone to St Andrew's, but in particular visitors and newcomers.

Details of services are given in the following pages and the back of the magazine. If you wish to know more about anything mentioned, please get in touch with the contact person named in the article or speak with me or one of the churchwardens. For contact details, see the previous page.

The church is open during daylight hours, and there is a prayer space by the main door where there is an opportunity to post prayers on the prayer board and light a candle.

THE CLOSING DATE FOR THE APRIL MAGAZINE IS **SUNDAY 23RD MARCH**. Please send copy by e-mail to hertfordsta@aol.co.uk Richard Taylor (Tel. 01992 302995).

CHURCH MATTERS



Sunday 4th May, 9.30am - 4pm
All Nations College, Ware

This year's theme is 'Peace'

- **Worship, workshops, free time**
- **Activities for young people**
- **Beautiful surroundings**
- **Two-course lunch**
- **Newcomers especially welcome**

We are looking forward to Away Day 2025 which, this year, takes place on Sunday 4th May at All Nations College on the Easneye Estate the other side of Ware - just 12 minutes' drive from Hertford.

We will explore the theme of Peace. This will be done through words, prayer, music and a range of activities that should offer lively and stimulating insights into the need for peace in our personal lives as well as in the wider world. There will also be time to experience the College's beautiful grounds.

As always, we welcome those of all ages including children and young people for whom activities will be organised. Also, this year, we particularly look forward to welcoming those who have joined our church in recent times.

The day will start with coffee at 9.30am, and then a short introductory all-age session with worship, followed by some deeper reflection for the adults and

separate activities for the children and young people. There will be a range of exciting workshops (we've already confirmed the always popular singing workshop, an art-based activity and a discussion group on Peacemakers). We'll then have a hot lunch (Sunday Roast with veggie options), some free time and a concluding Eucharist for all ages. The day will end with a cup of tea at approximately 3.45pm.

Please note that there won't be a 9.15am service at St Mary's or a 10.30am service at St Andrew's that day. There will be a short 8am service at St Andrew's.

The cost of the day, including lunch, will be £40 per adult with Under 18s attending free of charge. In previous years, some have offered to increase their payment towards the cost for others and this has always been welcome and helpful.

To book your place(s) please contact catherinesleath@gmail.com. If you are unable to use email, you should write a brief note confirming your interest and hand this to Robin Bishop or David Gorton at St Mary's or to Chris Seward or Catherine Sleath at St Andrew's. If the cost is preventing you from signing up, please speak in confidence to Chris Seward (01992 554217) or Rev Alan.

The Away Day will be Alan's last engagement before starting his three-month sabbatical (see overleaf), so do try to come along and be with him as he prepares for this important period in his ministry.

Know the Story; Share the Story; Live the Story

CHURCH MATTERS

ALAN'S SABBATICAL

Every ten years, vicars are offered the opportunity to take a three-month sabbatical (or Extended Study Leave). The object of the sabbatical is to recharge spiritually, make time for creativity and to engage in an area of study which is relevant to ministry. Between May and July this year, I will be taking a sabbatical from parish life. My plan is to study the Irish Wake and Irish traditions and rituals around death and dying, which will take me on a road trip around Ireland, culminating in the Keening Festival in the west of the country. I also plan to retreat to Northumbria, deepen my Mindfulness practice, take up pottery and fit in a holiday to Sorrento! I'm really looking forward to it and I'm hugely grateful for the opportunity. I know that I'm leaving both parishes in the very safe hands of Rev Bill, the wardens and the Ministry Team.

My last day will be Sunday 4th May which is our joint Away Day.

SPECIAL SERVICES COMING UP

Ash Wednesday:

**Wednesday 5th March at
10.30am & 8pm at St Andrew's**

Join us for a traditional service marking the beginning of Lent. Ash Wednesday focuses the Christian's heart on repentance and prayer as we enter the period known as Lent.



World Day of Prayer Service

**Friday 7th March at 2pm at All
Saints' Church Hertford**

World Day of Prayer is a global ecumenical movement led by Christian women who welcome you to join in prayer and action for peace and justice.

The programme for this year's World Day of Prayer has been written by women of the Cook Islands with the theme of "I Made You Wonderful," based on Psalm 139:1-18. The scripture reading from Psalms is woven together with stories of three women from the Cook Islands. We come to understand that God knows us, is always with us, and made us unique and special. Everyone is welcome to this special annual service.

Confirmation Service at St Mary's Hertingfordbury Monday 17th March at 7.30pm

Please come to St Mary's to support the candidates at this service when they will be confirming the promises made on their behalf at baptism. It's a special moment when each candidate receives the gift of the Holy Spirit by the laying on of hands by the Bishop.

Mothering Sunday at

ST ANDREW'S CHURCH

You're invited to our
Mothering Sunday
service for all-ages

SUNDAY 30th MARCH
at 10.30am

With a special performance by
Hertford Children's Choir

Know the Story; Share the Story; Live the Story

SERVICES AND OTHER EVENTS

Church Services

You will find a full list of church services on the final page of this magazine and on the church website, with some additional information about certain services on this and the following page.

Junior Church

Children are welcome to attend Junior Church which runs during the 10.30am Parish Communion service on most Sundays during school term time, except during an All-Age service (see below), when the children stay in church for the whole service.

ALL-AGE SERVICE

SUNDAY 9TH MARCH at 10.30am

SUNDAY 30TH MARCH at 10.30am

MOTHERING SUNDAY

A shorter, child-friendly, interactive communion service with songs, prayers and surprises.

St Andrew's services on Zoom

Zoom codes for online access and access via a landline are available from the church office: standrew.hertford@btinternet.com or by calling 01992 504373.

Join us on Zoom for:

Service of the Word

every Sunday at 10.30am with praise, prayer and teaching. There is a communion service once a month. Please check the services on the last page of this magazine and the website for dates.



**SUNDAYS on Zoom at 7pm except
Sundays when Soul Food is on
(usually first Sunday of the month)**

Compline is based on the Felgild Compline from the Northumbria Community and Night Prayer from the New Zealand Prayer Book.



**OUR MONTHLY PRAYER MEETING
IN PERSON & ON ZOOM
on Saturdays 1st March
& 5th April at 8.30am**

Join us on Zoom or pop down to St Andrew's and join us in the Lady Chapel as we pray for ourselves, our churches and our world during these worrying times.



*** IN CHURCH (& on Zoom) 7.30pm
ON WEDNESDAY 12TH MARCH
* ON ZOOM ONLY at 7.30pm on
WEDNESDAY 26TH MARCH**

Explore the riches of Christian Meditation and how it fits with the practice and insights of Mindfulness

Each weekly session is free and lasts for about 40 minutes. We begin with some gentle exercises to help still the mind and then a guided meditation, followed by some silence.

Beginners especially welcome!

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SERVICES AND OTHER EVENTS

soul food

**CONTEMPORARY
CAFÉ-STYLE SERVICE**
in the St Andrew's Centre
7pm
**Sunday 2nd March
& Sunday 6th April**

JOIN US AT 6.45 FOR REFRESHMENTS
a service with worship songs,
creative prayer, gentle discussion and
time for reflection.

FREE Mindfulness

WHEN
10.30AM
ON
MONDAYS
3RD MARCH
17TH MARCH
31ST MARCH

WHERE
Sele Community
Hub
Fleming Crescent, Sele
Farm SG14 2DJ

Mindfulness
can help with
**wellbeing, stress
and anxiety.** Come
along and join
the **FREE 30-min
sessions**, followed
by refreshments.

**Everyone is
welcome**
just turn up!

BISHOP ALAN ANNOUNCES HIS RETIREMENT

The Right Revd Dr Alan Smith, Bishop of St Albans, has announced his intention to retire in 2025. His letter to the Diocese is published in full below:

Dear friends and colleagues,

It has been the privilege of my life to serve as the Bishop of St Albans. However, next month I will be 68 and the time has come for me to lay down my responsibilities and to hand the baton of leadership on to whomever the Lord calls to succeed me. I am writing, therefore, to tell you that, with the support and permission of His Majesty the King, I will be retiring as Diocesan Bishop on 31st May 2025.

The past sixteen years have been full of challenges, opportunities and surprises. With God's help, I have encouraged us to 'Live God's Love' among the people of Herts, Beds and Luton and parts of Barnet, and to do so with generosity and joy, with imagination and courage. In that endeavour, I have been grateful for my colleagues on the senior staff and for the support of so many clergy and lay people across the Diocese. I never cease to give thanks to God for the warmth of your friendship. You have enriched my life and ministry in countless ways.

I plan to retire to Wiltshire, the county in which I was born and brought up, and where most of my extended family continue to live.

There will be plenty of opportunities to say our farewells in the Spring. In the meantime, I have many things I still want to do in my remaining months in office as I seek to serve God and prepare for the next phase of my life and ministry.

Please pray for me as I pray for you, + Alan St Albans

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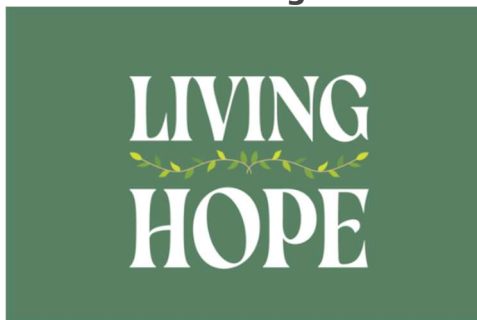
Serving the local community for ten generations

LENT

Ash Wednesday (5th March) is the first day of the season of Lent. Christians use this season to prepare for the great Feast of Easter, when we celebrate that Love conquers death, at the resurrection of Jesus. During these forty days many people give things up as a sign of getting ready and making space to welcome in the love of God. But it is also a time of giving to other people, and for repenting the things that separate us from God's love. Having ash put on our forehead is a badge to remind us of these things and gives this day its name, a custom which began in the Middle Ages. At St Andrew's there will be two services on Ash Wednesday, at 10.30am and 8pm.

The calculation of the forty days of Lent has varied considerably in Christian history. It is now usual in the West to count them continuously to the end of Holy Week (not including Sundays). Churches are kept bare of flowers and decoration. The Fourth Sunday of Lent (Refreshment Sunday) was allowed as a day of relief from the rigour of Lent, and the Feast of the Annunciation almost always falls in Lent; these breaks from austerity are the background to the modern observance of Mothering Sunday on the Fourth Sunday of Lent.

The Church of England's Lent theme for 2025 is:



This Lent we are encouraged to put down deep roots of hope by connecting with God who is with us at all times.

In Lent we journey with Jesus on the difficult and thorny road that leads all the way to the cross on Good Friday – and beyond, to the transformation of Easter Day.

God invites us to bring to him our own journey through everyday life. In the disappointment of daily setbacks and the pain of deeper hurts, we discover that God is present with us. And God promises a future where all things are healed and made new.

Living Hope offers us the opportunity to deepen our hope in God and be part of what God is doing to bring hope in the world.

The readings and reflections explore how we can have hope in times of frustration or uncertainty; the hope found in joining with others; the invitation to notice signs of hope around us; the courage to face reality and pursue a hopeful future; and the ways God transforms death into life at Easter.

You can sign up to receive Lent reflection emails and daily messages straight to your inbox. These will offer Bible readings, short reflections and a practical challenge, as well as prayers linked to weekly themes. Go to the Cof E website and click the tabs Faith & Life - What we believe – Lent, Holy Week & Easter – Living Hope: Lent Reflections.

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Contact Emma or Ian

email: sehscds@hotmail.com

phone: 07842034890

CHURCH FAMILY

FROM THE REGISTERS

BAPTISMS:

We welcome into the Lord's family:

2nd February

Cerys Laura Iris Morris-Bowman

Beaming up at Rev Alan Stewart is Florence Mae as he conducted her baptism at St Andrew's Church on Sunday 10th December. Pictured with Florence Mae are her parents Victoria and Charlie and with them were Florence's brother Cooper and other family members and friends. Florence Mae's Godparents are Kyra Holtby, Bridie McCausland, Anthony McCausland and Sean McCausland.



FUNERALS:

We extend our sympathy to the family and friends of:

13th February

Richard Hodding aged 99.

HARRY RUNS FOR NATIONAL ECZEMA SOCIETY



Please give support to Harry Longman who will be running the London Marathon. He is fundraising for the National Eczema Society (NES), a charity which means a lot to him having suffered from a severe form of eczema throughout his life.

You might get the opportunity to speak to Harry after a 10.30 Sunday service and ask him how his training is going. Please help Harry reach his target of £2,000. Any donation large or small will be greatly appreciated.

www.2025tcslondonmarathon.enthuse.com/pf/harry-longman?



DIAMONDS ARE FOREVER



Huge congratulations to Gilly and Steve Georgiou who celebrated 60 years of marriage on 21st February. To mark the occasion Laura Ramsay baked and decorated a beautiful cake which she presented to Gilly and Steve and came as a huge, wonderful surprise to them. It was enjoyed by the congregation after the 10.30 service on the morning of Sunday 23rd February.



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CHURCH FAMILY

ARCHIE'S THEIR NUMBER ONE

Jenny and Forbes Mutch are celebrating the birth of their first grandchild. He is Archie James who was born on 30th January at Kingston Hospital, south London weighing 8lbs 8oz. Archie's proud parents are Jay Forster and Claire Forster-Mant. Congratulations to the whole family.



ROSSI'S ATTIC



Our friends at Rossi's Attic in Hertford have only gone and done it again! THANK YOU to Helen and Earle, who have shown such amazing support for St Andrew's over many years, collecting donations for the church in their shop. We've just received a whopping £203.32! We are hugely grateful to all Rossi's Attic's customers who have given to the appeal.

Pictured are Earle, Rev. Alan and Helen with 'Loose Woman' Brenda Edwards when Celebrity Antiques Roadtrip paid a visit to Rossi's Attic.

ST ANDREW'S NEW SOUND SYSTEM

How do you fancy having a go at operating the new state of the art sound desk at St Andrew's? We are looking to build a bigger team of operators for services and other events we hold. It doesn't matter if you have not had previous experience of operating a sound desk as tuition will be given. Please speak with Chris Seward (01992 554217) or Richard Taylor (01992 302995) if you are interested.

HOLY WEEK & EASTER DATES

Monday 14th April Compline, 8pm *in church and online*

Tuesday 15th April Taizé, 8pm

Wednesday 16th April Meditation, 8pm

Maundy Thursday Eucharist, 8pm *with watch 'til 10pm*

Good Friday The Three Hours, 12-3pm

Easter Day 8am *Holy Communion*, 10.30am *All-Age service with choir and organ*



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EVENTS



March's Coffee Morning

Saturday 1st March from 10.30am to 12.30pm

In March, our Parochial Church Council will be running the Coffee Morning and continuing our fundraising efforts to install a defibrillator at St Andrew's Church. There will be a variety of stalls to browse - including crafts, books and Mothering Sunday gifts - live music from the super talented Theo on the piano and a raffle.

A defibrillator is a device that gives a high energy electric shock to the heart of someone who is in cardiac arrest. This high energy shock is called defibrillation, and it's an essential part in trying to save the life of someone who's in cardiac arrest.



April's Coffee Morning

Saturday 5th April from 10.30am to 12.30pm

With Easter on the horizon, there will be an Easter Egg Tombola, pop-up stalls selling a variety of wares and a children's crafts corner as well as the usual coffee and home-baked cakes to enjoy. Half of the money raised will go to CHIPS, a local charity offering playschemes and social fun for children aged 3-19 with additional needs and their siblings in East Herts, Broxbourne and Waltham Cross.

FUTUREhope QUIZ NIGHT



22nd March at Pioneer Hall, Ware Road, Hertford, 6.30 for 7pm start

A small charity operating in Hertford and Ware FUTUREhope offer a free, confidential service working holistically with young people aged 11-19 through four key areas of work: OUTREACH using a mobile youth centre, EDUCATION working with schools and offering a range of small group work

activities, SUPPORT meaning one to one mentoring and a weekly after school drop-in youth café for young people in school years 7 to 13.

Tickets £15pp (dinner included). Teams of 4-8 or turn up and join a team on the night. Tickets from Dave: dave@fhhw.org.uk

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CHILDREN'S PAGE



Mothering Sunday 30th March

Wordsearch Things that mum does...

R K O Y C O O K S E V O L
E S H Q S D N I M E R P A
A N S U S E U L A V S Q U
D A S E G N A R R A E F G
S E P A Y S B I L L S T H
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READS
REMINDS
SMILES
TEACHES
TRAVELS
VALUES

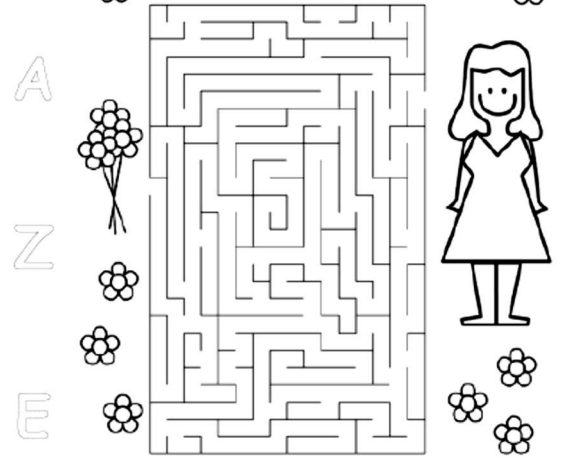


*For the one who has
lost a mother,
For the mother who
has lost a child
For the one who longs
to be a mum:
You are not forgotten
this Mothering Sunday.
You are in our prayers.*

Resources courtesy of:
kidsdomain.com,
sermons4kids.com;
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getcoloringpages.com;
clipartpanda.com

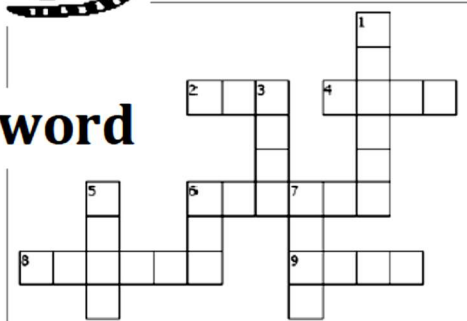


M BRING THE BOUQUET
TO MUM



WITH THANKS TO VAL HURFORD

Crossword



ACROSS

2. To hold someone close with your arms to show that you love them
4. A piece of writing in which the words often rhyme
6. A woman who has given birth to a child; a female parent
8. The first day of the week
9. The strong feeling of affection that you have for your mother

DOWN

1. The brightly-coloured bloom on a plant which has a pleasant smell
3. Another word for present; something which is given
5. Considerate and helpful; used to describe a person's behaviour
6. The fifth month of the year (when Mothering Sunday is celebrated in America)
7. To assist someone in doing something



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CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES

[There's more information on our website](#)



Hertford Children's Choir is a choir led by Rachel and Sam

Chaplin for anyone aged 8-13 who loves singing and wants to develop their musicianship. Rehearsals are on Fridays 5.30-6.45pm at St Andrew's Church Hertford and there are termly performances. See the church website for more information.

CHILDREN AT ST ANDREW'S

Children are never too young to come to church. You and your children are very welcome at St Andrew's. We realise that bringing children, especially babies and toddlers, to church can be challenging to say the least, so we have set aside part of the church (the Children's Corner) at the front of church (to the right of the altar) which is equipped with toys, books, craft materials and a space to call their own. Here, even if they are occupied with a toy or book, children absorb the atmosphere of worship.

Junior Church

During the 10.30am Parish Communion on Sundays in term time, there are activities for children in the St Andrew's Centre. Every Sunday except during the All-Age Service (usually the second Sunday of the month), the children will begin the service with the congregation and then, after the first hymn, they leave to join Junior Church.

All-Age Services

These are monthly, shorter, child-friendly, interactive communion services with songs and prayers which are held once a month: usually but not always on

the second Sunday of the month. Children stay in church for the whole of the service.

ST ANDREW'S YOUTH GROUP



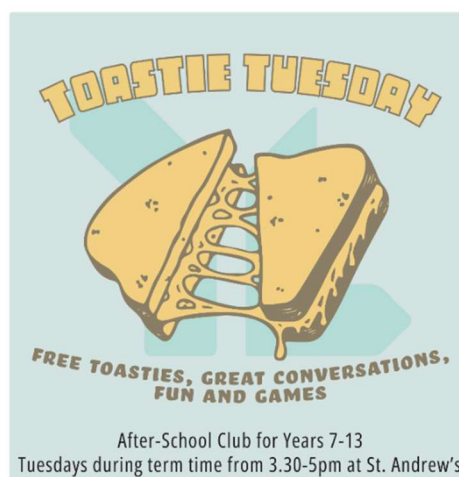
is for secondary-age children.

Like playing daft games? Having a laugh? Eating?

Curious about God, the Universe and everything in-between?

Brilliant, because so are we!

We meet usually on the first and third Sundays of the month from 4.30-6pm. *(dates, times and venues may vary - please check the calendar on the church website or email John - see below).* If you're not already receiving updates about TMM, please get in touch with John so he can keep you informed about what's happening week by week: johnwache@yahoo.com



Grab a toastie with your favourite fillings and enjoy time with friends, fun games and activities, plus meaningful conversations about life, faith and more.

Toastie Tuesday is run by Bryan Fries: bfries@ylinternational.org 07846 549809

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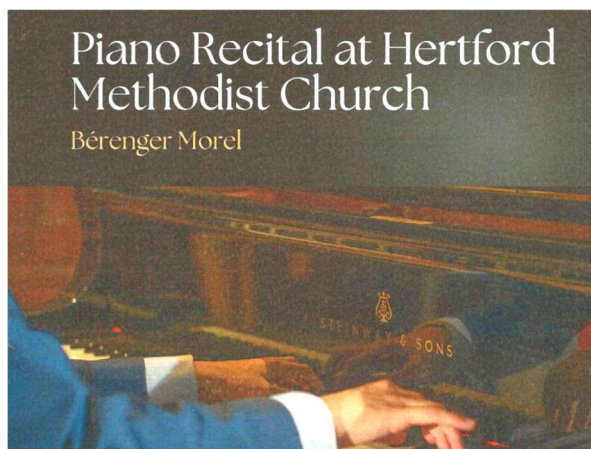
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EVENTS

EVENTS IN SUPPORT OF CHRISTIAN AID

PIANO RECITAL given by Bérénger Morel on Sunday 2nd March at 3pm – Hertford Methodist Church, Ware Road, Hertford Bérénger Morel is the youngest member of the Methodist Church team of musicians who accompany their services.

He is currently working towards his GCSEs at Haileybury. His 40 minute recital will include music by Bach, Mozart, Schubert, Chopin, Ponce, Glinka, Balakirev and Brahms, and will be followed by tea and cakes.



Admission free, but donations for Christian Aid will be very welcome.

INTER-CHURCH QUIZ

on **Saturday 10th May** in the St Andrew's Centre starting at 7pm. Food will be provided; bring your own drinks. Other details to follow. Money raised will go to Christian Aid.

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

An opportunity to support Sue Mulligan and Claire Hardy! Ware Musical Theatre will be performing one of their high-quality shows at the Drill Hall, Ware and Charles and Debbie Ledsam have secured twenty seats for the performance on **Thursday 27 March at 7.30pm**.

If you would like to join their party please let Charles or Debbie Ledsam know (charlesledsam@hotmail.com or 01992 584426). It may be possible to arrange lifts.

The show runs from 25th to 29th March see their website: www.waremusicaltheatre.org.uk for more information.

HERTFORD CHORAL SOCIETY

Hertford Choral Society are performing Mendelssohn's Elijah on **Saturday 29th March at 7pm at All Saints' Church, Hertford**.

The dramatic oratorio tells the story of Elijah one of the fiercest prophets of the Old Testament.

Tickets £20 reserved/£15 unreserved/£5 students:

email tickets@hertfordchoral.org.uk or in person at Hertford Tourist Office, The Wash, Hertford or speak with Debbie Ledsam.

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LISTENING TO THE DESERT WIND

Forbes Mutch reflects on the temptation of Christ in the wilderness



Thinking about Christ's time in the wilderness, I was wondering what it was really like to be in a desert. The nearest I've come to that kind of terrain is standing

outside Pheonix in Arizona, which is a bit tame, considering that there was a 7-11 diner less than five miles away.

Jesus didn't have that nearby comfort or luxury.

It is widely assumed that Jesus was tempted in the Judean Desert, also known as the Desert of Judah or the Judean Wilderness. It is located southeast of Jerusalem, along the western shore of the Dead Sea.

What was it really like?

Close your eyes for a moment and imagine a landscape of hard rock mountains and deep canyons, torrid heat, harsh sunlight, cracked earth, wind whistling, faraway eagles calling, the sound of your own steps, arid air, dust in your dry mouth, grit on your tongue, the smell of your own sweat, an insatiable thirst and hunger, pain from split lips and dehydration, cramp in your legs. It is not a pleasant experience.

In the Judean desert, summer temperatures rise to over 45C (or nearly 120F in old currency). There's hardly any rainfall in the Judean desert (less than 50mm a year); nothing really grows there, apart from a few scrubby bushes and flowers, which means any animals that survive there – a few scorpions, reptiles and skinny mammals,

such as gerbils, foxes and wolves – are hungry and therefore dangerous.

It makes you wonder why the Holy Spirit – to quote Mark's gospel – immediately drove Jesus out into this inhospitable environment for 40 days without food.

Well, the answer is that, historically, a wilderness was always God's favourite place for a conversation or a proving ground.

For the People of Israel and many of their leaders, the desert was a place of testing, encounter, and renewal. When the Israelites were freed from slavery in Egypt, they wandered for 40 years in the wilderness. This was seen as a time of purification and preparation for entry into the promised land.

Moses went to the mountain of the Lord in the Sinai wilderness and stayed there for 40 days and nights in prayer and fasting.

Elijah, after he was fed with bread from heaven, journeyed through the wilderness without any food for the obligatory 40 days.

So, it shouldn't be surprising that Jesus is in the wilderness for 40 days, because God wants a conversation with him about his big upcoming mission. Satan is there to do a bit tempting.

The word 'tempt' in English usually means to entice someone to do what is wrong or forbidden. The scriptural word used here also means to 'test' in the sense of proving and purifying someone to see if they are ready for the task ahead.

Talking of translations, the Hebrew word

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LISTENING TO THE DESERT WIND

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for the desert is MIDBAR. Because there are no vowels in Hebrew, the letters that spell it out are M-D-B-R. Coincidentally, this is also how you spell another Hebrew word, MEDABER – to speak.

I like Mark's account of the temptation. I used to spend many hours reading my parents' collection of Readers' Digest magazines, including the publication's condensed books. Do you remember those? You could read a shortened version of a Dickens' novel in a couple of hours.

Mark's version of the desert temptation is like that. John and Matthew go into much more detail in their gospels, telling us what Satan said and what Jesus said and all that stuff about stones and bread. Mark cuts to the chase, with no frills. *Jesus was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan and the angels waited on him.* That's it, end of story. The Readers' Digest version.

But short is powerful in this case. Mark's succinct passage is enough to remind me that this is Christ being his most human on earth. He has a wilderness experience, just as **we** have wilderness experiences in our own lives; where we feel alone, wandering around not knowing what to do or where to turn. The COVID pandemic and lockdown felt like a wilderness time for many people. A major health issue, trouble at work, relationship breakdown, these are some of the desert phases that people travel through in their lives.

And yet, while those times may be painful, true to form, it is in the wilderness that God often speaks most loudly to us. We don't necessarily meet Satan, but we come face to face with the

reality of our lives. And, to use that translation of temptation, we are tested. I don't believe God puts temptations in our way to see if we can resist to prove our faith, but I do believe God allows us to wander in the desert sometimes to remind us how much we should depend on him for strength, direction and guidance.

As we begin to observe our 40 days of Lent, we might be sacrificing some luxury items in our lives as a symbolic gesture to purify ourselves before Easter. But, as we start contemplating the torment of a day ahead with no biscuits, alcohol, cream cakes or Maltesers, we have to remind ourselves that it's not going to be as bad as the 40 days that Christ spent in the Desert of Judah. And if you are in a bit of a personal wilderness, worrying about something in your life, listen out for the still small voice of God, because, chances are, he's trying to have a conversation with you in the silence of the desert.

Prayer

Jesus, Lamb of God,
when you walked this earth you did not
consider heavenly equality,
though that was yours to choose.
Instead, you took the role of servant,
and in humility and obedience
allowed the hot sun to burn your skin,
the desert wind to dry your lips,
the cold nights to make you shiver,
And, in the end, the rough nails of our
sin to be hammered into your flesh
for the sake of our salvation.

And so it is that we acknowledge you
as Lord of all, to the glory of God the
Father, Son and Spirit, Three. Amen

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MUSIC EVENTS AT ST ANDREW'S



St Andrew's welcomes more of the country's headline folk performers in 2025 including...

Miranda Sykes & Jim Causley: Wednesday 19th March at 7.30pm

Miranda Sykes (best known for her work with Show of Hands) and Jim Causley (described by Mojo Magazine as "the finest singer of his generation") come to St Andrew's for the first time and will be performing songs from their new album, Last of the Singers. One of the country's very best folk duos. Tickets are £18 + £1.35 booking fee www.ticketsource.co.uk/st-andrews-church



Leveret: Thursday 8th May at 7.30pm



St Andrew's is delighted to welcome Leveret, a unique collaboration between three of England's finest folk musicians. "You won't find English folk music played better than this" (BBC Radio 2). Andy Cutting (button accordion), Sam Sweeney (fiddle) and Rob Harbron (concertina) are each regarded as exceptional performers and masters of their instruments. Together, their performances combine consummate musicianship, compelling delivery and captivating spontaneity. Their playing is relaxed and natural, drawing audiences in and inviting them to share in music-making that is truly spontaneous.

Gryphon: Sunday 15th June at 7.30pm

Gryphon could be described as "Henry VIII meets 1970's Prog Rock"! But the band is also lauded for its inclusion of English folk music, jazz and much else. They claim to be the only band to have been played on Radios 1, 2, 3 and 4 in the same month!



LATER IN THE YEAR

Phil Beer: Thursday 18th September

Formerly with Show of Hands, forever popular.

Chris White & Julie Matthews: Thursday 9th October

"They light up the room with their amazing energy" (James Taylor).

Fairport Convention: expected around 30th October to 2nd November 2025

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FOODBANK NEWS



Throughout 2024 we were blown away by the generosity of our local community, giving not only donations of food & money, but their time, energy, prayers and constant encouragement. We are incredibly grateful for all the support and ask that you continue to support us throughout 2025 and for as long as we are needed.

We helped to support over 3300 individuals last year, providing them not only with nutritionally balanced food to help them during their time of crisis, but also where needed signposting or working directly with agencies to help them get back on their feet and out of crisis. There are over 80 agencies currently linked to the foodbank, 59 of these used our services in the last six month.

It's great to be able to work with agencies throughout our district to help everyone we can. Our aim remains the same – we want to see more people helped out of crisis and fewer people needing foodbanks in the future.

Thank you for all your support and please do keep us in mind throughout the year.

OPENING HOURS

Hertford @ The URC

| | |
|-------|---------|
| Mon | 10-11am |
| Tues | CLOSED |
| Wed | 10-11am |
| Thurs | CLOSED |
| Fri | 10-11am |

Ware @ The Priory

| | |
|-------|---------------|
| Mon | CLOSED |
| Tues | 10.30-11.30am |
| Wed | CLOSED |
| Thurs | 10.30-11.30am |
| Fri | CLOSED |

DONATION LOCATIONS

ASDA, Sainsburys & Tesco

hertforddistrict.foodbank.org.uk

Give in Lent



Lent with a difference, rather than giving something up, why not donate something instead. Some ideas below.

| | | | |
|--------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|------------------|
| 1 Tinned Meat | 2 UHT Milk | 3 Soap | 4 Tinned Peas |
| 5 Chocolate Spread | 6 Long Life Fruit Juice | 7 Biscuits | 8 Tinned Custard |
| 9 Curry Sauces | 10 Chocolates | 11 Tinned Rice Pudding | 12 Rice |
| 13 Coffee (100g) | 14 Toilet Rolls | 15 Cooking Sauces | 16 Squash |
| 17 Peanut Butter | 18 Tinned Potatoes | 19 Packet Soup | 20 Hot Chocolate |
| 21 Tinned Fish | 22 Shampoo | 23 Tinned Carrots | 24 Instant Mash |
| 25 Jam | 26 Washing Pods | 27 Tinned Sweetcorn | 28 Toothpaste |
| 29 Pasta Sauces | 30 Marmalade | 31 Conditioner | 32 Fairy Liquid |
| 33 Shower Gel | 34 Tinned Spaghetti | 35 Tinned Fruit | 36 Baked Beans |
| 37 Tinned Meat Pie | 38 Treats | 39 Jar of HotDogs | 40 Easter Eggs |

Donations can be dropped to:

Hertford United Reform Church or Foodbank at the Priory, Ware
Mon/Wed/Fri 10-11am Tues/Thurs 10.30-11.30

Thank you!

Registered Charity Number:1157028 - Registered in England & Wales

Ending hunger together



Easter Egg Appeal

Help our food bank provide Easter eggs in the parcels we'll be giving out this Easter to those in crisis.

Please bring all chocolates and Easter eggs to the Hertford, Ware & District Foodbank by Friday 4th April.

Thank you!

Donations can be dropped to:
Hertford United Reform Church
Mon/Wed/Fri 10-11am
or
The Foodbank at the Priory, Ware
Tues/Thurs 10.30-11.30

Registered Charity Number:1157028 - Registered in England & Wales

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THE BEATITUDES

The Beatitudes - a series of blessings from Jesus that sum up Jesus' teaching about what it means to follow Christ. Jesus gives us a vision of a world redeemed by love, and the qualities of discipleship which will bring about that transformation.

They can be found right at the beginning of a long passage of teaching by Jesus in Matthew's Gospel, known as the Sermon on the Mount. Just as Moses taught the people of Israel from the mountain after he had received the Commandments, so Jesus begins his ministry by going up a mountain and teaching his disciples.

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God.

Blessed are those who suffer persecution for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Some of these sayings are difficult to understand, and some are uncomfortable for us today as they would have been to Jesus' first hearers.

In a recent sermon (which can be found with many other sermons on the church's website), Rev Alan refers to having written a few years back his own Beatitudes which began,

'Blessed are the hopeless cases, the lost causes, the misfits, the disposable, for you will be valued in the household of God'.

He challenges each one of us to write our own beatitudes.

St Andrew's Men in the Morning home group decided to take on this challenge recently. They came up with the following:

Blessed are those who think before speaking and pray before acting.

Blessed are those who know when to keep quiet and to listen to what others have to say.

Blessed are those in the NHS frontline who keep calm and look after us, often under great pressure.

Blessed are the joy bringers.

Blessed are those who speak truth unto power.

Blessed are those whose glass is half empty.

Blessed are the abused and the exploited.

Blessed are the forgotten.

Maybe these will inspire you to have a go at writing your own Beatitudes.

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LOCAL CHARITIES

WORKING IN THE COMMUNITY

Street Pastors, Hertford & Ware, are part of a national team first pioneered in 2003.

Street pastors are trained volunteers from local churches who care about our community, and particularly about people in the nighttime economy.



They can be on patrol from 10.30pm up to approximately 2am on a Friday or Saturday night to care for, listen to and help people who are out on the streets.

They are led by a local co-ordinator and also have support from local churches and community groups in partnership with the Hertfordshire Police, East Herts Council, the town councils of Hertford and Ware and other statutory agencies.

Their operational strength is currently 11, and as such they are still typically operating only two patrols a month. Hertford, and particularly Ware, continue to be much quieter than before the pandemic and increased policing means that that typical patrols are going out till 2:30am, rather than the 3-4am as was the norm before the pandemic. Over the Christmas holidays they patrolled on the Saturday before Christmas and New Year's Eve. On both occasions, Hertford was very busy, but very friendly with few problems and the Street Pastors had many meaningful interactions and discussions.

David Elder, the Co-ordinator, continues to meet with police, the council, and the licensing officer on an ad hoc basis. He then feeds back operational information to Hertford & Ware Street Pastors on issues in the town from the previous weekend and future events that may require a larger presence on the streets.

New Volunteers

New volunteers are needed and if you are interested in finding out more about Street Pastors and their work please speak with David who can be contacted by phone on 07704 768931 or **Email:** hertfordandware@streetpastors.org.uk

FUTUREhope



Owen Melville-Thomas, who runs FUTUREhope, would love to hear from anyone who feels they may be able to give up **an hour or two to help FUTUREhope** come alongside local young people. This might be an hour a week listening to and chatting with a young person, it might be making milkshakes once or twice a month at our Drop In café or perhaps being on our Bus which goes out on Friday evenings. We provide full training and support for all roles and **you can get in touch with us by emailing info@fhhw.org.uk.**

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LOCAL CHRISTIAN WORK

Young Life Update

From Bryan Fries



As usual the run up to Christmas was busy and we had lots of extra activities with the young people, which were loads of fun. These included playing Laser Tag against Young Life Hoddesdon (we won), a Bonfire night at the Chaplins' house, (which included Capture the Flag in the dark), a Christmas Film night and Christmas Party. These extra activities really help the group bond and grow, where we all get to relax, have fun, get to know each other and have lots of laughs.

This term we have been doing the Alpha Course in Campaigners on Monday nights, which has sparked some very interesting questions from us all, and has made us look at faith in a new light. Please pray with us that there is much fruit from it. Last month we also had a residential camp at the YHA in Cheshunt. The camp was focused on discipleship and growing in our faith. There were bible studies, talks, seminars, prayer walks, bingo, games, free time, lots of eating, discussions and making new and seeing old friends.

As well as all our special events we continue to run Campaigners on Monday nights, Toastie Tuesday at St Andrew's Church, give out free hot chocolates on Wednesday mornings and support Richard Hale with lunchtime clubs. Our focus is now turning to day camps, summer camp in Scotland, our quiz night in June and celebrating 25 years of Young Life in Hertford. How time flies!

Please pray for more young people to hear about us and come to club and Campaigners, as we would love to see the group grow.

We are looking for Christian adults to join our leadership team or Committee. If you are interested, or know someone who is, please get in touch with Bryan.

bfries@ylinternational.org

HERTFORD WELLBEING CHURCH

is a ministry group that seeks to provide a community for young people in Hertfordshire, helping to disciple them, as well as shining a light on those who do not yet know Christ. Here is short update on a couple of initiatives.



Social Media: we are working on content and the aim is to go live on TikTok in the next few weeks. Our objective remains to reach out to 18-30s in Hertford who have no connection with churches.

Hertford BEAM Theatre: we are in discussions with BEAM about hiring a cinema screen to show films with a Christian theme. One possibility would be *The Passion of the Christ* in Holy Week. The tickets would be subsidised, and the intention is to target 18-30s and provide coffee and drinks afterwards and the opportunity for debate and discussion.

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Services at St Andrew's

March 2025



To attend a Zoom service please email the Parish Office at:- standrew.hertford@btinternet.com

| | Date | Time | Service | Celebrant | Preacher |
|-------------------------|------|----------|---|------------------|-----------------------|
| SUNDAY | 2 | 8.00 am | Holy Communion (BCP) | Rev Alan Stewart | Adrian Walter |
| <i>Next before Lent</i> | | 10.30 am | Parish Communion with Junior Church | Rev Alan Stewart | Melanie Seward |
| | | 10.30 am | Eucharist Service on Zoom | Kath Oates | Melanie Seward |
| | | 7.00 pm | Soul Food contemporary worship | Rev Alan Stewart | |
| Monday | 3 | 8.00 am | Morning Prayer (Common Worship) | | |
| Wednesday | 5 | 10.30 am | Holy Communion (Traditional) | Rev Bill Church | |
| <i>Ash Wednesday</i> | | 8.00 pm | Holy Communion (Imposition of Ashes) | Rev Alan Stewart | Rev Bill Church |
| Thursday | 6 | 8.00 am | Morning Prayer (BCP) | | |
| | | 10.30 am | Holy Communion Calton Court | Rev Bill Church | |
| SUNDAY | 9 | 8.00 am | Holy Communion (BCP) | Rev Bill Church | |
| <i>Lent 1</i> | | 10.30 am | All Age Service | Rev Alan Stewart | Geoff Oates |
| | | 10.30 am | Eucharist Service on Zoom | Rev Bill Church | |
| | | 7.00 pm | Compline on Zoom | | |
| Monday | 10 | 8.00 am | Morning Prayer (Common Worship) | | |
| Wednesday | 12 | 10.30 am | Holy Communion (Traditional) | Rev Alan Stewart | Scott Martin |
| Thursday | 13 | 8.00 am | Morning Prayer (BCP) | | |
| SUNDAY | 16 | 8.00 am | Holy Communion (BCP) | Rev Alan Stewart | |
| <i>Lent 2</i> | | 10.30 am | Parish Communion with Junior Church | Rev Alan Stewart | |
| | | 10.30 am | Morning Service on Zoom | Kath Oates | Rev Alan Stewart |
| | | 7.00 pm | Compline on Zoom | Rev Alan Stewart | |
| Monday | 17 | 8.00 am | Morning Prayer (Common Worship) | | |
| Wednesday | 19 | 10.30 am | Holy Communion (Traditional) | Rev Bill Church | |
| Thursday | 20 | 8.00 am | Morning Prayer (BCP) | | |
| | | 10.30 am | Holy Communion Calton Court | Rev Bill Church | |
| SUNDAY | 23 | 8.00 am | Holy Communion (BCP) | Rev Bill Church | |
| <i>Lent 3</i> | | 10.30 am | Parish Communion with Junior Church | Rev Alan Stewart | Maria Henriksson-Bell |
| | | 10.30 am | Morning Service on Zoom | Forbes Mutch | Nick Hoyle |
| | | 6.30 pm | Evensong St Marys Hertingfordbury | Rev Bill Church | |
| | | 7.00 pm | Compline on Zoom | Rev Alan Stewart | |
| Monday | 24 | 8.00 am | Morning Prayer (Common Worship) | | |
| Wednesday | 26 | 10.30 am | Holy Communion (Traditional) | Rev Bill Church | |
| Thursday | 27 | 8.00 am | Morning Prayer (BCP) | | |
| SUNDAY | 30 | 8.00 am | Holy Communion (BCP) | Rev Alan Stewart | |
| <i>Mothering Sunday</i> | | 10.30 am | All Age Service with choir and organ | Rev Alan Stewart | |
| | | 10.30 am | Morning Service on Zoom | Kath Oates | |
| | | 7.00 pm | Compline on Zoom | Rev Alan Stewart | |
| Monday | 31 | 8.00 am | Morning Prayer (Common Worship) | | |